

Company Number 05564649
A Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in England

St. Leger Homes of Doncaster Limited
BOARD MEETING

4 June 2008

Present

James Parkin, Lyn Ralph (Chair), Frank Protheroe, Brian Naughton, Cllr Bill Mordue, Michael Hardy, Phillip Jackson, Kate Radovanovic, Asma Hassan, John Young MBE.

In Attendance

Gary Wells (DMBC)

Also In Attendance

Martin Musgrave (Chief Executive), Judith Jones (Director of Customer Services), Paul Hopkinson (Director of Property Services), Trevor Lincoln (Director of Business Planning), Linda Milan (Company Secretary), Maxine Newton (Board Support Officer).

Members of the Public

David Farrell, Peter Turner, Rodger Haldenby, Rory Perrett, David Nevett, Ian Gardner.

1. Apologies and Quorum

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Peter Chapman and Cllr Stuart Exelby.
- 1.2 It was noted that a quorum was present, Lyn Ralph Chaired the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest by Board Members

- 2.1 Lyn Ralph and Brian Naughton declared an interest in agenda item 7 – Tenants Participation & Consultation Review of Policy, commenting that they had been involved in the consultation process.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 May 2008 and matters arising

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 7 May 2008 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

3.2 Matters Arising

- 3.2.1 The following matters were discussed:-

From item – 3.2.1 (13.5) Property Standards Review – Lettable Standards – the Chair queried whether the 'Surestop' devise was being fitted as part of the Decent Homes programme, it was confirmed this was the case.

ACTION

4. Chief Executives Report – Agenda Item 4

4.1 Governance

4.1.1 Buddying of Board Members

The Chief Executive raised that Board Members will be offered a group appointment with a Director shortly before each Board meeting and hoped that the Members would take full advantage of the opportunity to buddy the Directors.

4.1.2 Chair of Audit

He commented that following the resignation of Cllr George Beck it was necessary to appoint another Chair to the Audit Committee. Consideration was given to whether members should submit nominations or whether to delegate the responsibility of nominating a Chair to the Audit Committee.

Members agreed to delegate the responsibility of nominating a Chair to the Audit Committee.

LR/JY/
MH/SE

4.1.3 Representation for the West Area Board

Following the resignation of Sid Hall and Cllr Pat Haith the West Area Board no longer have the 2 Board members required under the company constitution or the 3 Board representatives (1 Tenant, 1 Independent and 1 Council Member) that would represent the Board on each of the Area Boards. As the remaining Board representative on the West Area Board is a Tenant Member it was suggested that the additional Board Representative should be either an Independent or a Council member.

Board members discussed they wish to co-opt a representative from the West Area Board to the vacant Board Member position

It was agreed to ask the West Area Board to nominate a tenant representative to co-opt onto the Main Board until the AGM.

LM/JJ

4.1.4 Recruitment & Selection of Tenant & Independent Area Board Members

The CE confirmed that the Council have not yet reached a decision regarding the realignment of their Neighbourhood Management structure and therefore SLHD was not yet able to make the necessary preparations to change the geographical boundaries of our Area Boards.

This will impact on the process of recruitment and selection of new Tenant and Independent Members following the required rotational requirements as some Members may be recruited and become no longer required or conversely too few appointments made.

It was therefore suggested that the process of rotational resignations and appointments to the Area Boards be suspended until April 2009.

Recruitment to the vacant positions on the Board would continue as normal.

Board agreed to these suggestions.

4.1.5 Stores / Depot

It was confirmed that the decision due to go back to Exec Board was pushed back to the end of July.

4.1.6 The Chief Executive confirmed to members that Health & Safety standards were being monitored and not compromised until a decision was made by DMBC. A Member asked whether SLHD was putting itself at risk until the time that DMBC made a decision. The Chief Executive confirmed that a Health & Safety inspection was carried out by an independent outside agency that has helped SLHD to mitigate any short term risks.

It was confirmed that 2 reports are to be considered by DMBC, 1 report regarding Health & Safety and another giving the financial information.

4.1.7 Financial Website

The Director of Customer Services confirmed that the new site was in the final stages of testing and that a link would be sent to all Members once this was complete.

JJ

Forward Plan

4.1.8 Members were invited to contact Maxine if they required any additions to the plan.

5. Area Board Feedback

5.1 The Chair of the East Area Board gave Board Members an overview of the issues raised by members of the East Area Board in relation to the Performance Indicators:-

- Rent Arrears – showed a deterioration. This is being addressed and the impacted of actions assessed.
- Repair Contact Centre – there is still an outstanding fault on the DMBC VIP telephone system, investigations and discussions with the Council are ongoing.
- Capitol Programme – on target but experiencing quality issues with 2 contractors. Members of the East Area Board are satisfied that appropriate measures are being taken to improve the situation.
- Average time to re-let empty properties – Improvements have been hidden as 15 long term voids have been brought back into letting stock.
- Average time for non-urgent repairs – The East Area Board approve the more challenging target of 9 days.
- Gas servicing – 51 gas safety certificates (CP12's) outstanding. The East Area Board are concerned about the Health & Safety implications and are satisfied that staff continue to take all

appropriate actions.

- Capitol Programme – The East Area Board have been informed of delays in 9 properties attributed to delays in gas connections and additional works requirements. Contractors are being encouraged to ask for extensions when similar circumstances arise.

The Chair of the West Area Board gave Board Members an overview of the issues raised by members of the West Area Board in relation to the Performance Indicators:-

- Current rent arrears – there are issues with the South/West & North/West arrears investigations are ongoing.
- Repairs – are handled within response times and categorised into the 5 categories. West Area members challenged how repairs may be prioritised incorrectly. The West Area Board requested a report detailing how the batching of repairs operated at the next meeting.
- Evictions - there is an interest from the West Area Board to keep the numbers low.
- Average time to relet properties and number of lettable voids – the floods have had an impact on the figures but the West Area Board Members are considering the underlying trends.
- % of appointments kept – scrutiny
- Gas servicing – similarly concerns expressed to the East Area Board, with Members currently satisfied that measures are in place to address gaining access into properties.
- Repairs Contact Centre - average queue time – again the VIP telephone system fault was raised.

5.2 Asma Hassan joined the meeting.

5.3 The Director of Customer Services added that it would be beneficial to look at performance from April being the beginning of a new financial year.

6. Communication Strategy

6.1 The Chief Executive presented this report. The purpose was to set a communications framework and strategy for St Leger Homes of Doncaster in 2008.

6.2 A Member pointed out a minor amendment at Appendix A of the report under 'How the objectives will be achieved'. Reading from the first paragraph, fourth line, the sentence needed to be completed.

6.3 One member commented that the employee survey had been carried out in 2005/06. The Chief Executive acknowledged his comment explaining that at that time the Directors and management team were driving the organisation to achieve 2 star status, and it was important to raise performance within the company. However a further survey had been undertaken.

It was confirmed that the next staff survey would be linked to the staff **MN**

conference in October 08. A Member requested that this was included in the Forward Plan for the Board

He added now SLHD has invested a large amount of work in training, currently managers were undertaking coaching training in order to improve its management capacity.

6.5 The Board approved the strategy.

7. Tenants Participation & Consultation Review of Policy

7.1 The Director of Customer Services presented this report and asked the Board to note the reviewed policy and action plan that explained how the company informed and consulted with its customers.

7.2 She pointed out that very few changes were made after consultation, and referred members to Appendix A that detailed the changes made.

7.3 The Board agreed the policy and action plan.

8. Former Tenant Arrears Write Offs

8.1 The Director of Customer Services presented this report that provided detail of the former tenant arrears cases that have met the criteria to be written off.

8.2 She commented it was good accountancy practice to write off accounts which had been thoroughly investigated and if the tenants were subsequently traced the debts are reactivated and payment sought.

8.3 It was agreed to give further detail in the Appendix to show the amount that had been written off each month in addition to the cumulative amount. Members were informed that a report on this issue would be brought to each Resources board meeting.

RW

8.4 Members approved the report.

9. Board Member Payments

9.1 The Director of Business Planning presented this report, the purpose was to advise Board Members of the feasibility of introducing formal payments to Board Members in recognition of duties.

9.2 He confirmed that since 1 April 2005 ALMO's were given the freedom to make remuneration to Board Members. The report included market research as to what other ALMO's and RSL's paid its members. It also highlighted the implications of introducing payments.

9.3 A debate took place with members mentioning the possible impact on those members who received benefits and other possible

implications re the introduction of payments to Board Member. Members felt that the company's ability to recruit Members with the required skills to serve as Board Members should be considered.

9.5 A member of the public asked if they could comment on the matter, which was agreed. As a tenant he said he wasn't in favour of such payments being received by Board Members.

9.6 **It was agreed to defer the decision until after the AGM when the experience with this year's recruitment could be considered.**

It was also agreed to bring a report back to the February board meeting that included the option of making donations to other organisations.

LM

The Chief Executive suggested that the Remuneration Committee be included in the production of the report.

10. Board Member Attendance Register

10.1 The Company Secretary presented this report that confirmed the register of the Main Board Members attendance.

10.2 One member stated that Board member training was not included on the spreadsheet. He was informed that this would be looked into.

LM/MN

10.3 **Members approved the register.**

11. Service Standard Review

11.1 The Director of Business Planning spoke to this item. He explained that in meeting of the Finance & Performance Committee it had been agreed that the number of Service Standards should be reviewed. Consultation had taken place with the Standing Joint Committee of the Tenants and Residents Associations (SJC) who had raised a number of concerns about some standards being removed from the list.

The Standards contained in Appendix 2 are those that can be measured and monitored effectively with other items being monitored by means of reality checks etc.

11.2 **The Members approved the revised standards and asked that a formal response is given to the SJC.**

TL

12. Any Other Business

12.1 There was no further business to report.

13. Date of next Board meeting

13.1 Wednesday 2 July 2008

Members of the public were asked to leave the meeting.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, on the grounds that exempt information as amended defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule A to the Act is likely to be disclosed.

14. Repairs & Maintenance Market Testing

- 14.1 The Director of Property Services introduced the tenth of the regular update report for the Repairs & Market Testing.
- 14.2 He informed Board members that he wished to discuss the benchmarking of the periodic electrical testing programme review.
- 14.3 Board Members considered the presentation and recommendations in detail.
- 14.4 **Board members approved the recommendations.**
- 14.5 The Chief Executive asked for SLHD officers to leave the meeting, he wished to speak with all Board Members.

15. Performance Related Pay

- 15.1 The Chief Executive updated Board Members in the current position regarding the issue of Performance Related Pay.
- 15.2 The minutes of the Extraordinary Board meeting held on the 12 March 2008 were presented by the Chief Executive.
- 15.3 The Chief Executive left the meeting.
- 15.4 Mr John Young noted that his apologies had not been recorded. Board Members approved the addition of Mr Young's apologies
- 15.5 **The minutes of the Extraordinary Board meeting held on 12 March 2008 were agreed as a true and accurate record.**
- 15.6 The Chief Executive rejoined the meeting.
- 15.7 The Chair tabled two papers, one the Alistair Mackintosh workshop from the NFA Conference about what a Boards role should really be.
- 15.8 The second paper, the back two pages of the training done with Simon Ramshaw.

15.9 Members discussed both papers, however there was a general feeling within the Board that more time was required to fully understand both items.

15.10 It was agreed that the possibility of an extra meeting be discussed at the July Board.

August was proposed as a suitable date for the meeting to be held.

15.11 The proposal was to add back a meeting as a planning meeting for a full day away in November

The meeting ended at 7.10 pm